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Letter dated 10 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter addressed to you by Taïb Fassi Fihri, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **Loulichki**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 10 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Kingdom of Morocco has repeatedly brought to the attention of the United Nations the serious and recurrent ceasefire violations perpetrated by the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y Río de Oro (POLISARIO) with the active support of Algeria.

Today, it is my duty to inform you of a serious act committed in flagrant violation of Military Agreement No. 1 that has concluded with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which is responsible for monitoring its implementation.

On 10 April 2009, a group of 1,400 persons, including foreigners and flanked by armed POLISARIO soldiers, came within 100 metres of the M.18 base of operations of the Berm for the Mahbès subsector.

The group had set out from Algerian territory aboard a convoy of 90 jeeps, 10 trucks and one bus that extended along a 600-metre front.

Some POLISARIO elements, armed with personal weapons and mine detectors, flanked the demonstrators, uprooted barbed wire and removed mines from the Berm. They also fired shots into the air. A number of demonstrators were injured by a mine explosion.

This proves that the operation, overseen by armed elements and involving the use of firearms, and perpetrated in plain view of MINURSO observers, constitutes a clear violation of Military Agreement No. 1.

Furthermore, the action, initiated and carried out directly from Algerian territory, confirms the unambiguous involvement of that country in its planning and execution.

Had it not been for the restraint and the strong sense of responsibility shown by the Royal Armed Forces, the incident could have escalated into a direct confrontation that would have had unpredictable consequences for peace and stability in the region.

The Kingdom of Morocco has continually drawn the attention of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and MINURSO to the dangers posed by such provocative and allegedly civilian acts, denounced their recurrent nature and called upon the United Nations to shoulder its responsibility in the zone east of the Berm.

The other Parties interpret the passive attitude of MINURSO with regard to such acts as encouragement to continue the perpetration thereof. With this escalation, a further step was taken, endangering civilian lives.

The Kingdom of Morocco strongly condemns such provocative and dangerous acts. It calls upon the United Nations to shoulder its responsibility and take the action necessary to extend its authority in the zone located between the Berm and the Algerian and Mauritanian territories, in which, pursuant to the 1991 Military Agreements, no fait accompli or change in the status quo is to be allowed, on any pretext.

The Kingdom of Morocco will continue to ensure that its territorial integrity and national unity are respected, and it reserves the right to take all measures necessary to put an end to such acts, preserve its national security and ensure the tranquillity of its population.

This serious incident comes at a time when the Security Council is about to consider the Report of the Secretary-General and promote the resumption of negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolution 1813 (2008). The incident was motivated by the same logic as other recurrent attempts by Algeria and POLISARIO to undermine United Nations efforts to relaunch the negotiation process.

All those actions expose the determination of the other Parties to stop at nothing in order to impede the process of finding a realistic political solution to the regional dispute over the Sahara.

For its part, the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to cooperate peaceably with the Security Council, the Secretary-General and his new Personal Envoy, with a view to making progress along the strongly encouraged path to a political solution.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Taïb **Fassi Fihri**